



DOE Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Program NSA/AAO Site at Barrow, Alaska

Site Safety Orientation

Purpose

This document provides an overview and summary of safety issues and safe work practices associated with operations at North Slope of Alaska/Adjacent Arctic Ocean (NSA/AAO) sites. It is intended for site visitors as well as routine site personnel and briefly outlines job-related hazards and applicable safety policy for activities at the site. Additional supporting documentation follows this orientation document and is referenced as appropriate in this document. Complete background information on the various safety hazards and work practices summarized here is available in the ES&H notebook located at the ARM/NSA office as well as at the ARM/NSA web pages through the ES&H link.

(<http://www.arm.gov/docs/sites/nsa/documents/esh/index.html>)

Hazards you may encounter while working at the NSA offices or NSA field measurement sites (e.g. Barrow field Site--aka Great White or Atqasuk field site).

Transportation Hazards – Tracked Vehicle, Snow Machine and Sled

- Trained drivers only please. If you have requirement for tracked vehicle or snow machine use, contact Walter Brower, the Facility Manager (907-852-1436) or Wayne Einfeld, the Site ES&H Coordinator (505-845-8314) and make arrangements to view a snow machine training video and go through hands-on training at the Barrow office. The tracked vehicle is normally reserved for local ARM personnel use. If access is needed, contact Walter Brower.
- Always check the gas/oil level in the snow machine prior to use, particularly during

severe weather. It is advisable to visually check the fuel level since the gauge can freeze up and give a false indication. Remember that it is a long walk back to the NARL area in a -75F wind chill.

- Ensure that you have adequate cold weather protection for both driver and sled riders. If your snow machine fails, you may find yourself on foot.
- When underway, be careful to avoid protrusions from the tundra (sticks, pipe) as many exist near the track out to the Great White.
- Adjust your speed according to weather conditions. Blowing snow, fog, low-light, or whiteout conditions require extreme caution and reduced speed.
- If you not an experienced snow machine operator (and nearly all visitors are considered inexperienced drivers) DO NOT use a sled behind the snow machine. If you need to tow equipment and/or passengers get help from Walter or Jimmy.
- The snow machine speed limit for all drivers is 25 mph or less when towing passengers or equipment. This is particularly important for towing on icy surfaces, since the sled has a tendency to fishtail on ice or hard pack snow. Note that a sled passenger standing “dog-sled style” at the rear of the sled can minimize fishtailing by dragging a foot in the snow.
- Except under emergency conditions, snow machines are not to carry passengers. Carrying a passenger while towing a sled is particularly hazardous. The sled may hit a passenger falling off the snow machine.

Transportation Hazards – All Terrain Vehicle

- Trained drivers only please – a training video is available at NSA offices. Contact Walter Brower to arrange for training.
- No more than one passenger on the ATV and no passengers in the ATV bed please.
- Drive the ATV on existing roadways and pathways only and not on the delicate tundra. Driving off-road will cause tundra scars lasting for decades.

Cold Weather Hazards

- Be aware of weather conditions and dress appropriately prior to heading for the Great White or other remote work sites. Don’t under dress—you never know when you may be required to walk when you planned to ride. Always ensure that someone in your party has a cell phone and spare battery.
- Weather conditions (temperature, humidity, wind, and wind chill) can be checked at the

Barrow NWS site via the web link

(<http://www.wunderground.com/US/AK/Barrow.html>), using the NSA office computer.
The site is book marked under the "guest" login profile of Netscape Communicator.

- See the Cold Weather Hazards document at the ARM/NSA website under the ES&H heading for additional information.

Animal Predator Hazards

Polar Bears

Most of the year and particularly when the ice pack is adjacent to the shore, a polar bear hazard exists in the vicinity of Barrow. Firearms and ammunition are available both at the NSA office and the Great White for use by those who have completed a site-specific firearms training course. It is not required that each work group be in possession of firearms during work activities at remote sites. If you are a visitor and are uncertain about the polar bear hazard, consult with Walter Brower, the site facility manager. The decision for firearm use or non-use is left with experienced site personnel on a day-by-day basis and will depend on such factors as the perceived threat and planned activities at the site. While working at the site (with or without firearm protection) be continually aware of the threat, and know your route to safety. For extended periods of outdoor work or activity, establish a formal bear watch among your work group. Additional information can be found in the Bear Safety Plan at the ARM/NSA web site under the ES&H Documents heading.

Remember, if you are a visitor and unfamiliar with the bear threat and not firearms trained, don't make assumptions prior to working at remote sites. Speak to someone like Walter or Jimmy who are knowledgeable about the threat and are firearms trained. Listen to what they tell you and do what they say.

Firearm Guidelines

Firearms and ammunition are maintained in arms safes at both the duplex and the Great White. **FIREARMS ARE TO BE USED BY TRAINED PERSONNEL ONLY** and only authorized users have access to these safes. Those persons with current training and authorized by the SPM for firearm use are listed at the ARM web site.

- If your firearm training is out of date (1-year duration) do not check out a firearm.
- If you are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, do not check out a firearm.
- All firearms and ammunition must be signed out and in. Sign out sheets are located in 3-ring notebooks at both gun safes (Duplex and Great White).
- Ammunition is inventoried so don't lose it. If you do, note the loss when you check the equipment in.
- Firearm practice is encouraged. Check with the Site Manager (Zak) about periodic, organized, practice shooting events.
- If you find yourself in the situation of having shot a polar bear, call the North Slope

Borough Wildlife Management Department (852-0350) and report the incident. Be prepared for considerable reporting requirements in association with the incident.

Other Wildlife

- Foxes are common in the area and rabies is endemic in the fox population. About 50% of the population is infected. Use caution and avoid foxes.
- If you get bit or scratched by a furry critter, seek medical attention immediately.
- Mosquitoes are ubiquitous in the summer season. Cover all exposed skin to avoid bites and later discomfort.

General Work Practices

- If you are a visitor, you must coordinate all your work with Walter Brower, the Site Facility Manager. If you are working at remote sites you must tell Walter where you are going, when you are going and when you expect to return.
- The buddy system is strictly in force for occasional site visitors. Visitors to the Great White or other remote sites must be accompanied by regular site personnel—no exceptions.
- Routine site workers may occasionally encounter the need to travel to remote sites and work alone. This practice should be infrequent and should be considered carefully, particularly during severe winter weather. See the Alternate Buddy System policy at the ARM/NSA website under the ES&H heading for more information.
- If you absolutely must go to the site alone, you must notify a fellow worker of your time of departure and your expected time of return. This is an important rule—failure to follow it may result in disciplinary action.
- Any work party going to the Great White must be equipped with a cellular phone and a spare battery. The phone and battery should be kept warm in an inside pocket. Emergency notification numbers should be carried along with a phone. You may also dial 911 for local emergency response.
- Keep the working surfaces at the Great White clear of snow and ice. Always exercise caution on walking and working surfaces that may be ice or snow covered.

Equipment Exposure Hazards at the Great White

Electrical Hazards

The usual warnings apply here. Physically disconnect (pull the plug) main ac power connections to instruments prior to working on them. Lockout tags are available and should be used for systems that could be powered up by someone not working at the instrument. When troubleshooting an open instrument with power applied, exercise extreme caution when working and probing inside the instrument.

Circuit breakers

Circuit breakers are NOT designed as disconnect switches under load, unless labeled as such. Make sure all loads are turned off as much as possible to reduce or eliminate loads on circuit breakers before turning any breaker off. Always make sure to stand off to the side of a breaker when turning it on or off, in case failure might occur, to reduce injury possibilities, particularly to the face or torso.

Noise Hazards

The RASS unit emits a loud warble during atmospheric sounding for 10 minutes every hour. Under normal site operations and conditions, exposure to this noise will not be hazardous to your hearing and hearing protection is not required. The audio amplifier circuit should be disabled before working on the sound sources since exposure at close range can damage your hearing.

EMF Hazards

The mm Cloud Radar and the 915 MHz Radar Wind Profiler emit energy in the vertical direction at microwave frequencies. Under normal working conditions, microwave exposure hazards are insignificant for persons working at the site. Do not extend any part of your body over the Cloud Radar or Wind Profiler antenna while these instruments are in operation.

Cryogenic Hazards

During certain instances, some instruments may be onsite that require liquid nitrogen for various detectors. Persons handling cryogenic fluids must be equipped with a face shield and insulating gloves.

Optical Hazards

Several instrument systems (the ceilometer and micro-pulsed lidar) incorporate pulsed laser sources. These systems both use Class I (eye safe) lasers and do not pose an exposure hazard to

the unaided eye. Binoculars or other optical devices should not be used to view the exiting beam however, since they may focus hazardous levels of laser light into your eye.

Pressurized Gas Hazards

Insure that all compressed gas cylinders are secured to a wall or rigid frame in an upright position with straps or chains. When a cylinder is not in use, screw the protective steel cap over the cylinder valve. When transporting cylinders, insure that they are securely tied down to the transporting vehicle or sled and that valve caps are in place. Remember that an unsecured gas cylinder, which is punctured or has a severed valve fitting is an uncontrolled rocket and you may find yourself in its path.

Meteorological Tower Hazards

Do not climb the meteorological tower at the site under any circumstances. Tower inspections and maintenance of tower sensors that necessitates climbing the tower will be carried out by professional tower service personnel only. Tip Tower lowering and maintenance should be normally be done in cooperation with regular site workers. If Tip Tower maintenance or lowering is required, it must be done using the ARM/NSA Tip Tower Lowering procedure available at the ARM/NSA web site under the ES&H heading.

Other Miscellaneous Hazards and Guidance

Emergency Exit from the Great White

An emergency exit is located in the Great White opposite the main entrance. This exit may be used in case of fire or another need to rapidly exit the facility. Be aware that an approximate 6-foot drop exists between the emergency exit door threshold and ground. An external ladder is fixed below the door threshold to aid in evacuation.

Duplex Fire Hazards and Emergency Exit

The duplex living and office quarters are equipped with smoke alarms and a total of three fire extinguishers. The fire extinguishers are located in the entry way and on the walls between the kitchen and the bathrooms in each of the duplex units. Bedroom and office windows may be your escape routes in the event of a fire so insure that they are operable when you begin using a room. In the case of an emergency evacuation, remember that weather conditions may be severe and that you should take outdoor clothing with you. You can also seek immediate shelter in the main NARL building, located immediately behind the duplex. This building is open 24 hours a day.

Duplex Electrical Hazards

If for some reason, electrical power must be shut off to duplex circuits, a breaker box is located

in the utility room which is accessed from the duplex entry way.

Duplex Living

A number of household rules are posted in the living quarters of the duplex and at the ARM/NSA/AAO web page under the ES&H heading. Familiarize yourself with these to make your stay go smoothly.

Accident Reporting

If you are injured or involved in an accident while working at the site, you must report the accident through your employer and you must notify the Site ES&H coordinator as well. For example, if you are a PNNL employee you must report the accident through PNNL channels following PNNL procedures. If you are a visiting scientist, you would report the accident through the laboratory or agency that is funding you. You are also required to notify Wayne Einfeld, the Site ES&H coordinator or Bernie Zak, the Site Program Manager. If you are a Sandian, Sandia contractor, or subcontractor, you and the Site ES&H coordinator must report the accident using Sandia form number 2050P which is available at the ARM/NSA/AAO web site under the ES&H link. Lessons learned from such occurrences will be used to minimize future occurrences.

When any accident occurs at the ARM/NSA/AAO site involving ARM project personnel or contractors that has the potential for having caused significant bodily harm, whether such harm is apparent or not, medical checkout through local medical services is mandatory and not optional. This policy applies to Sandians, Sandia contractors and subcontractors.

Enjoy your stay at ARM/NSA/AAO and Work Safely